



REMINDER!

NJPHA's annual meeting will be held on December 6th @ the NJ Hospital Association in Princeton, NJ. More details at: www.newjerseypublichealth.com.

2012 Board Meeting Schedule—All Members Welcome

Jan 12	10 AM (phone)
Feb 9	7 PM
Mar 8	10 AM (phone)
Apr 12	7 PM
May 17	10 AM (phone)
Jun 14	7 PM
Jul 12	10 AM (phone)
Aug 9	7 PM
Sep 13	10 AM (phone)
Oct 11	7 PM
Nov 8	10 AM (phone)
Dec	Annual Conference

The 7 PM meetings will be held at a location TBD.

Call-in information:
888-721-8686
Conf. ID: **3271474**

If you would be interested in giving a presentation on a public health topic at one of the board meetings, please contact Sarah Kelly at: sarahwkelly@gmail.com.

Obesity Prevention in New Jersey

The “obesity [epidemic] is today’s tobacco” problem and the “clarion call for public health [workers] to leverage a multidisciplinary/transdisciplinary approach to prevent it before it happens with healthy eating and physical activity,” Dr. Dennis Zanel-la recently stated. He is the managing partner and medical director of SciMedica Group and the President of the New Jersey Public Health Association.

Zanella presents a compelling clinical perspective on obesity with its multiple sequelae, such as “Type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular complications, kidney disease, cerebrovascular disease and metabolic syndrome, which ramifications further aggravate the healthcare crisis and the cost burden on the society.” According to *Endocrine Today*, from 2007 to 2009, 2.4 million more US adults were obese, and there is no indication that such an increase is leveling off. Further, New Jersey is the tenth leanest state in the nation, yet ranks number one in obesity among low-income children aged 2 to 5 years old. This is troubling because these children are more likely to become obese adolescents and adults, according to an interview with Janet Heroux, Physical Activity Coordinator for *ShapingNJ*, the state obesity prevention partnership, coordinated by the

New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services.

In the context of this epidemic and the disheveled US healthcare system, clinicians are attempting to manage this cohort of obese adults and children, especially with such a “multi-organ/multi-system disease.” Zanella states, “We need to move from a culture of disease management to one of prevention and wellness. This can be show-cased in child and adult obesity.”

New Jersey’s homegrown effort to prevent obesity -- *ShapingNJ* -- seeks to implement change through environmental and policy initiatives to improve access to healthy foods and beverages and opportunities for daily physical activity for all New Jersey’s residents. According to Heroux, evidence indicates that an individual’s attempt at behavior change is often not effective – the environment where people live and interact must change, requiring a trans-disciplinary approach engaging many different sectors of society. Ultimately, obesity is about individual behavior, “but our behaviors are strongly influenced by our surroundings—whether you can walk or bike or must drive everywhere, whether it is safe to go out and play or a child stays indoors watching TV, whether schools serve healthy foods and snacks or junk—so organizational

policies and community environments must foster and support healthy behaviors.”

The Department of Health is also supporting several policy and environmental change initiatives with *ShapingNJ* partners with the help of federal stimulus money. The Pediatric Council on Research and Education is seeking to change the practices in maternity hospitals in New Jersey with respect to breastfeeding. It is well known that breastfeeding helps prevent childhood obesity. This initiative gave grants to ten hospitals providing care to high-risk mothers to establish the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding (implementing the UNICEF/WHO Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative in the US, <http://www.babyfriendlyusa.org/eng/10steps.html>).

Another state effort provides grants for training and technical assistance to licensed childcare providers to ensure children in

(Continued on page 2)



Publications



Recently published an article? Notify Sarah Kelly or Katie Stewart so that we can post it in the next newsletter and share the wealth of expertise and the latest news with the members of NJPHA.

Sarah: sarahwkelly@gmail.com
Katie: katiestewart3@comcast.net



Obesity Prevention in New Jersey, (contd. from p. 1)

(Continued from page 1)

their care have healthy nutrition (e.g., low-fat milk and water), opportunities for active play, and less television viewing. Simultaneous to this initiative, a statewide advisory group has made significant progress in requiring that child care centers provide such healthy care. Revised state licensing regulations will soon be open for public review.

Heroux also reported an ongoing collaboration between the New Jersey Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Voorhees Transportation Center at the Bloustein School, Rutgers University to promote "Complete Streets" policies. A "Complete Street" is one designed for the needs and safety of all users—pedestrians, cyclists and those with physical disabilities, as well as automotive vehicles. Such streets encourage the daily physical activity so necessary to maintaining good health and preventing disease. (See the latest report by NJ Future on the assessment of the Complete Streets program implementation in New Jersey, <http://www.njfuture.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/complete-streets-report-FINAL-web.pdf>.) Thirteen municipalities and one county in the state have adopted a Complete Streets resolution.

In addition to ensuring that New Jersey's children are healthy, "staying fit is essential for adults," according to

Heroux. She further stresses that a minimum of one-half hour of moderate activity (e.g., brisk walking) for most days of the week will sharply reduce adults' risk of disease and early death. Physical inactivity is not the only factor that contributes to the obesity epidemic. Poor nutrition is also an important component of this problem. "Americans eat a lot because food—especially fatty or sugary food—is cheap and everywhere," Heroux stated.

The systemic change required to combat the obesity epidemic is complex, intricate, and involves every level of society. Progress is being made, but real, lasting change occurs slowly and incrementally.



NJPHA Board Members 2012

President: Sarah Kelly

Past President: Dr. Dennis Zanella

ALL OTHER BOARD POSITIONS ARE AVAILABLE.

Please contact Sarah at sarahwkelly@gmail.com or Dr. Zanella at dzanella@scimediacgroup.com if you are interested

NJPHA Board Members 2011

President: Dr. Dennis Zanella

President-Elect: Sarah Kelly

Past President: Michelle Kennedy

Second VP: Jim Brown

Treasurer: Shirley Smoyak

Secretary: Nousheen Mohsin

Member-at-large: Denea Hampton